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The City of La Vista, Nebraska

Report of Open-ended Question 2008



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Survey Background.....1

 About The National Citizen Survey™ 1

 About Closed-ended and Open-ended Questions:..... 2

Understanding the Results3

 Verbatims 3

Appendix A: Verbatim Responses4

SURVEY BACKGROUND

About The National Citizen Survey™

The National Citizen Survey™ (The NCS™) is a collaborative effort between National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) and the International City and County Management Association (ICMA).

The National Citizen Survey™ was developed to provide local jurisdictions an accurate, affordable and easy way to assess and interpret resident opinion about important community issues. While standardization of question wording and survey methods provide the rigor to assure valid results, each jurisdiction has enough flexibility to construct a customized version of The National Citizen Survey™ that asks residents about key local services and important local issues.

Results offer insight into residents' perspectives about local government performance and as such provide important benchmarks for jurisdictions working on performance measurement. The National Citizen Survey™ is designed to help with budget, land use and strategic planning as well as to communicate with local residents. The National Citizen Survey™ permits questions to test support for local policies and answers to its questions also speak to community trust and involvement in community-building activities as well as to resident demographic characteristics.

The survey and its administration are standardized to assure high quality survey methods and comparable results across The National Citizen Survey™ jurisdictions. Participating households are selected at random and the household member who responds is selected without bias. Multiple mailings give each household more than one chance to participate with self-addressed and postage paid envelopes. Results are statistically weighted to reflect the proper demographic composition of the entire community.

The National Citizen Survey™ customized for this jurisdiction was developed in close cooperation with local jurisdiction staff. The City of La Vista staff selected items from a menu of questions about services and community problems; they defined the jurisdiction boundaries we used for sampling; and they provided the appropriate letterhead and signatures for mailings. City of La Vista staff also determined local interest in a variety of add-on options for The National Citizen Survey™ Basic Service.

One of the add-on options that La Vista chose to include was an open-ended policy question.

About Closed-ended and Open-ended Questions:

Questions can either be asked in a closed-ended or open-ended manner. A closed-ended question is one where a set of response options is listed on the survey. Those taking the survey respond to each option listed. Open-ended questions have no answer choices from which respondents select their response. Instead, respondents must “create” their own answers and state them in their own words. The verbatim responses are categorized by topic area using codes. An "other" category is used for responses falling outside the coded categories. In general, a code is assigned when at least 5-10% of responses will fit the code.

Advantages of an open-ended question include:

- Responses are not prompted, allowing respondents to provide answers that are not anticipated or well known.
- This type of question tends to capture response options that come to mind most quickly.
- The final result can be richer, since verbatim responses are included in an appendix, giving you and others a chance to “hear” the voice of respondents in their own words.
- There is a smaller risk of missing important dimensions.

UNDERSTANDING THE RESULTS

Verbatims

Respondents were asked to record their opinions about La Vista in the following question:

- What is La Vista's single most pressing need in terms of community amenities, facilities, services or events?

The verbatim responses were categorized by topic area and those topics are reported in the following table with the percent of responses given in each category. Appendix A includes a full set of verbatim responses. Those verbatim responses are grouped by the first topic listed in each comment whenever a respondent mentioned more than a single topic. Verbatim comments that contain more than one topic nevertheless appear only once in Appendix A (in the category of the first topic listed), however the analysis in the table below counts each of the topic areas given by all respondents regardless where those topics appeared in the comment.

Results from the open-ended question is best understood by reviewing the table of frequencies that summarize responses as well as the actual verbatim responses themselves.

Question 16d: What is La Vista's single most pressing need in terms of community amenities, facilities, services or events?

	Percent of Respondents
More retail and restaurants/filling old Wal-Mart shopping center	29%
Parks and recreation programs/swimming pool/aquatic center	12%
Infrastructure and code enforcement	11%
More/better fire, police, snow removal, core services	10%
Cultural and community events/programs	7%
Low income housing for seniors and families	3%
Other/doesn't apply to question	18%
Don't know/Nothing	8%
Total	100%

APPENDIX A: VERBATIM RESPONSES

- Clean up Wal-Mart shopping center/84th Street corridor. Create a sense of downtown. Bring more sit down restaurants and quality shops to the Cabelas area. Enough business and fast food already. Network the library with Omaha's system and bring all library services online like they do. Make aquatic facility an indoor one. We don't need another Papio Bay. We need one to use year round.
- Business development - get something to go into Wal-Mart.
- Revitalizing businesses along 84th Street.
- Keeping businesses from leaving to Papillion.
- Attract businesses - retail to replace Wal-Mart and other vacant locations along 84th. Expanded bus service.
- We need to get tenants back on 84th Street. The empty Wal-Mart/paper warehouse/summer kitchen need to be filled by a major company.
- Developing 84th Street corridor - replacing vacant stores (Wal-Mart, Gordmanns, etc). The vacancies concern me from economic standpoint. La Vista is a great place to live. City services are first rate - very professional. Good service from city officials.
- Redevelop the old Wal-Mart building and surrounding strip mall.
- Revitalize the retail shopping on 84th Street.
- I have only lived in La Vista since August of 2007 so I am not sure what the most pressing need may be except to get something into the old Wal-Mart building to keep other stores from leaving.
- Retail.
- Land use, planning and zoning. I am very disappointed with Wal-Mart and Gordmans move and leaving the city. The growth in and around i-80 appears to be where the city is going toward and I do not see where it will benefit the citizens of La Vista.
- Bring replacement business of quality into old Wal-Mart strip area. No discount or big lots type business. If we build a quality pool, La Vista should support and promote business across the street. Do something about the other vacant buildings in area on 84th street. Many of us never go out to western La Vista or have any need to do so. Do more to make 84th Street look like a town and not a strip to pass thru.
- "We need to get an active business into the old La Vista, Wal-Mart building and fill the other empty places at this 84th Street ""eyesore"". Apart from that we have a very nice community."
- The need to bring businesses back to Brentwood square.
- Large business companies for job opportunities with competitive pay offers. Year round city income revenue would benefit in having a movie theater, preferably in the old Wal-Mart shopping area on 84th Street.

- Need to get something in old Wal-Mart store and in the other bays there. Also need to check playground more often for bad word (vulgar) on equipment, teens after dark. Sand has glass in it (central, La Vista Children's Park). Apollo Park needs to go. Or police need to patrol it more often. It is dirty, has vulgar words everywhere.
- Closing of businesses on 84th Street. Vacant buildings.
- Restaurants.
- Get more retail/commercial property in to the old Wal-Mart building and revitalize the look of that strip mall.
- It would be nice to have a shopping facility such as the mark pte (in Papillion) here in La Vista. The Bakers (Brentwood Village) area really does not offer a whole lot and the old Wal-Mart store really needs a business in there. Bring in the businesses, don't shove them off to other suburbs or areas.
- La Vista needs to re-evaluate the shopping center that was formerly occupied by Wal-Mart. La Vista is a beautiful city other than this eyesore. We really need to try and entice businesses to lease the space or look at demolishing the site for something more useful and attractive to the city. The idea of the potential water park sounds great, but it would take away from La Vista small town feel. I really thing that we have a hard to find city filled with potential, but maybe we should think about keeping that great small town feel.
- More retailers back on 84th Street.
- Re-designing and filling old Wal-Mart area. Better street drainage along Park View Blvd. More strip mall shopping. Thompson Creek housing issue.
- Miss stores to shop closer.
- "I feel there are too many buildings up ""for rent"" and wonder why our great stores are moving elsewhere. In the 7+ years I've lived here, nine stores have closed in the Brentwood square and closely surrounding area."
- Fill empty buildings with new tenants - old Wal-Mart and adjoining strip mall.
- More retailers - similar to what Papillion has done over the past few years.
- "To do westward expansion, those of us in the near east end are being abandon by family restaurants, service stations and personal needs establishments. The former ""Wal-Mart"" complex is becoming a ghost town. Unless something comes back to this area, we will become a ghetto."
- Fill old Wal-Mart site.
- More retail on 84th Street for tax reasons.
- Not a good variety of restaurants - mostly drive thru too many strip malls - more apt to have abandoned spaces not put to use.
- A wider variety of restaurants.
- More shopping and bus service on a daily basis that would have stops at various locations - eliminating the need to call. More jobs for the workers needing jobs.

- Increase in places to eat and shop. More events to attend...i.e. concerts, farmers market, shows, plays.
- Continue to strongly get vital businesses into the old shopping centers, as some people prefer smaller shops - we need the taxes.
- A tenant for the 84th Street vacated Wal-Mart stores and the others that are vacant in this complex.
- More businesses, more jobs, better paying jobs, new owner of La Vista keno!
- Need to occupy old Wal-Mart building and entire plaza by building. Affordable homes \$190,000 and lower. More stores similar to outdoor malls around town. Movie theaters.
- Filling the vacant stores on 84th Street.
- Doing something with old Wal-Mart building, cleaning up appearance of 84th between Giles and Harrison.
- Need to find a business to replace the Wal-Mart building on 84th. It is a big eyesore.
- Bringing businesses back to 84th Street (between Harrison & Giles). It seems like a lot of businesses once located there are moving to Papillion. We need to revitalize this area.
- The City of La Vista needs to do something about the eyesore left from Wal-Mart. That shopping area almost looks blighted, and it is in desperate need of updating.
- Economic development on 84th Street - between Parkview Blvd and Giles Road.
- Filling up the vacant stores along 84th Street. Too many stores moving out and too many already left empty too long. What is noise level for La Vista? Try putting a control on level of noise from cars with boom box stereos.
- We need Wal-Mart back or something like it.
- The growth of 126th and Harrison is wonderful. I hate to see all the businesses of 84th Street moving to Papillion - not good for our tax base. Hope we can revitalize 84th Street.
- Access to local grocery store is 10-15 minutes commute. It would be convenient and a benefit to have a closer store or small market (maybe farmers market) for fast purchases. If I felt safer to bike to work I would rather do that or if there was more public transportation.
- Business growth.
- Low housing for seniors.
- Cheaper housing.
- Affordable single family house for a single parent.
- More housing for seniors.
- I feel there needs to be more housing available to single parents. It would also be good to offer single parenting classes, available free of charge or parenting classes in general. My daughter would definitely attend. It would strengthen our community and keep down crime.

- It would be nice if there was more apts for a little low income people, but not poor person. When a road is being made (like on cornhusker road) with the city's growth why not make the road at least 4 lanes. Cause in a year or two we'll have to widen it again and there is another cost. Then the interruption of traffic.
- Affordable assisted and non-assisted community style living centers for the elderly. Replacement retail in the former Wal-Mart shopping center.
- When I first moved to La Vista, the city made me fix the cracks in my sidewalk, trim my trees, permitted only one trash can in front of my home. All of this made me upset. But La Vista neighborhoods look very nice. I walk all over La Vista, Ralston and into Papillion and I must say I am not overly proud of how it looks. I would welcome tighter control on my home and neighborhood. Thank you.
- When a person calls a City of La Vista employee regarding a health code violation within their living conditions, it would be helpful if the person would return a voice mail message. Employee Jennifer Nelson (I believe this is her last name) was contacted twice and never returned the call. This is the only encounter I have had with La Vista services but the one important problem took several weeks to resolve after contacting someone else within the system.
- "Can you check the timing on the lights when you come off the interstate, from Westbound 80, and head towards ""PayPal"" light. You barely get up to speed and you have to slam your brakes to stop because the light just over the interstate changes, then you get going again and the ""PayPal"" light changes and 9 times out of 10 the Cabellas light changes. My gas just keeps going away and if I slow down, knowing this is coming, 3 cars burn around me & end up slamming on their brakes. Thanks!"
- I think the sidewalks are in poor shape.
- I think you need to look at rental property and holding property owners responsible for clean up and repair. Rental property brings home values down. Animal barking control is an issue in the neighborhood and animal neglect.
- Clean up the graffiti on the bricks at the entrance to central park - move La Vista days out of central park. Build a bike trail/jogging path that ties into the Omaha bike trail.
- I do a lot of walking outside even in the winter months and all the homeowners that don't shovel their walkways.
- City code enforcement needs to build better relationships with the residents by more effective communication skills. There is a problem with unkept lawns, weeds, abandoned vehicles, trees too low to sidewalks, the codes are not enforced or they need to be more strict.
- Rental property maintenance needs to be more monitored. The public library needs to be more community friendly, not just part of the metro college facility, monitoring of computer labs and more current books for adults as well as young adults and more high school age resources. We have a strong need for revitalization of the Wal-Mart strip mall area.

- The traffic lights timing are terrible. That included lights on 84th Street and 126th and Giles by the new Cabelas. If you hit one of them, you hit them the whole way.
- I have lived in La Vista 3 months. My most pressing problem is transportation. I cannot drive as I am 80 years old - you have the things to go to...library, shopping, community center and the bus or van for rides but either they won't go to my doctors appts (I come from 120th and Center) they say too far or it is full - or takes schedules call in 2-3 days. Anyhow just to let you know of my problem getting around.
- Too many run-down houses in many different neighborhoods. Too many barking dogs in many neighborhoods. Found signs of graffiti and vandalism in two different parks.
- Clean up the run down properties and yards.
- You spend all your time with businesses, people need to spend time looking at some of the homes in this community. Some of the homes in my neighborhood are a disgrace.
- La Vista needs to fix their streets and sewer systems instead of milking us for money to make a new pool, please fix the cracks in the streets. You guys are focusing on things we really don't need.
- Connect bike trail to Keystone. Better support to local small business owners. Clean parks & trails more often. Property taxes are still too high.
- Snow, street, sidewalk repair, better courtesy from officers about what is going on in the community.
- More recreation facilities - the new aquatic facility is a good start. More street lights on 96th Street.
- More activities for teens, children nothing to do much in La Vista. Clean up old Wal-Mart buildings. Make look more modern, up to date, buildings look rundown. Not enough lights in apt complexes, street cleaners not cleaning as good as they do in the nice house areas - apts areas bad, show bad, poor.
- A larger, well groomed swimming pool. Soccer for children until 16 years old. Street plowing done earlier, especially valley road, 24 hour snow removal enforced more.
- Just a place for kids to play.
- "As a community of ""middle class"" working people, I have always hoped, requested and asked for some type of classes at the rec center in the evening hours for both children and mainly adults. I would very much welcome an activity to look forward to after work days."
- La Vista lacks recreation programs. Also the facility is small and lacks adequate equipment. Library needs more books.
- The new aquatic facility. We need to keep some money in the city. I have a membership to Papio Bay. Why not anything in La Vista to help our revenue. More amenities and activities for our kids - lets keep them a little more busy. Our city's reputation is declining and I do enjoy our community. Lets rebuild our status.
- Dog park, theaters.
- To build a new swimming pool.

- A dog park would be nice to have.
- Getting the new water park. I feel it would be real positive for La Vista. Heck we got everything else but a decent water park or swimming pool for that matter and lets face it, any town can put in a swimming pool but not every town can say they have the means and ways to put and have a water park of their own. Plus need something in this corridor to bring people here seeing as their is no more Wal-Mart.
- New pool.
- Bigger recreational facility along with more governmental involvement with community events such as Christmas, Halloween events and fire prevention events.
- The aquatic facility, if built, should be indoor/outdoor for year round accessibility.
- Indoor swimming, more gymnasium courts, better weight training stations, bicycle paths.
- We need the new aquatic facility. The pool we have is outdated. We also need to keep the family pass to it at a reasonable rate for La Vista residents.
- Larger community center for the youth.
- New aquatic center - no diving board, need an easy river and fun items.
- Basketball courts.
- Maybe to make things (recreational activities, pool) more accessible for low income families. I was shocked when I took my daughter to the pool and found out how much it was to go there one time. Public transportation would be nice too.
- Pool - water activities.
- Aquatic facility. Publicizing activities at the rec center.
- Speed limit enforcement.
- Better, more responsive snow removal while lowering the tax rate.
- Another fire department, hospital.
- Police slowing down speeders. Less unnecessary spending - this survey for one.
- The La Vista police need to spend less time with small traffic violations and more time on major crimes.
- Trash removal should be part of taxes, not separate payment. More parks or update existing parks.
- More supervising during night time around this area to prevent crimes. There has been two different cars of my family members that have been broken in during night time at two different occasions.
- Police force abusive of powers and over bearing. Ask anyone who wants to open a business with a liquor license required. They will be targeted and choose not to bring their business to La Vista.
- Police services, the City of La Vista is growing but there is not enough police activity. Ever since the new police station was built, you don't see police patrols in the older part of La Vista, 72nd Street, between Harrison Street and Giles Street needs to be monitored

for speeders, especially in the afternoon when kids are dismissed from school. The police force needs to listen to the residents, not ignore them.

- Budget for more police officers.
- Better police patrol at night.
- More personable contact with law enforcement.
- New district 1 fire station. An eyesore next to city hall. We have volunteers - get them nice equipment to help keep them motivated - they are great! Police need more new cars. Need more retail and jobs. Keep the money in La Vista.
- Get rid of drug/crime by policing apartment complexes frequently. More things for kids to do.
- Stress the curfew laws more where the youth is ticketed and next time ticket the parents. Need more after school activities and also should enforce a law about age of children watching siblings. Some police officers have different information on what is considered stealing from neighbors porches and also on stalking with cameras. Was given different explanations from different officers.
- Controlling unsupervised kids. Teenagers with loud stereos in their cars. Need some programs to channel kids into constructive activities.
- As La Vista is adding businesses to the community, the fire department needs to become full time. Every house fire I have seen has been a total loss requiring the dept to call Ralston, Papillion, Bellevue for help. Rec dept has not had a new program in the 6 years I have lived here. Snow removal is not consistent, sometimes it is good, sometimes not as good depending on if the public works wants to use enough salt. If the city council would of been open to get IKEA or Crate & Barrel versus money losing Cabala's to town, things would be different. City council consists of too many local yokals who haven't lived anywhere else.
- Crime from Omaha crossing into city limits. We need more regular police patrols on the east/central side of La Vista.
- I'd like to know more about community events since I work in Bellevue, I haven't gotten involved enough in La Vista activities.
- The library system in and around La Vista really needs improvement. I have lived in cities/counties before that had a city-county library system available to all citizens/taxpayers in the city-county areas. I think this could be beneficial for our city. There should also be an improvement in recycling. There should be more drop off sites that are better publicized to make it easier.
- Betty library programs for youth.
- Communication - the city fails to effectively communicate with the citizens. If you don't read the newspaper or go to a city council meeting, you have no idea what is going on in town. The citizens of La Vista have no access to city hall or public records on Friday afternoons. Isn't that against the law to be closed?

- Activities for youth - using some of La Vistas unused land for a skateboard park would be great. It would give the kids something to do instead of cause problems at the park (which has nothing for older kids to do). Also, getting rid of non-profit organizations (re-runs) that make money for a Papillion based organization.
- I like all of the community activities & sports options that are available...please keep these up.
- Movie theater.
- I just moved to Nebraska 3 months ago. This city seems to offer small town feelings with a larger city needs. I like being in this smaller community with everything I need only a few minutes away. I see there are many rarities of activities for my family and I to attend.
- There are not interesting cultural events.
- More churches and a museum about the history of the area.
- More community activities.
- More activities for school age children after school.
- To give the teenagers more places to hang out, like we did. Where they can watch their music videos on a big screen and do homework. That is what they'd do at home with their friends or a skateboard rink park with music videos, during the day, inside, and no big money to get in. The old Wal-Mart building should be for the kids to hang out. Give them a cool place to go and let them be kids. Ages 13 years to 18 years or 19 years. Please.
- More fun events for the family.
- I like the economic development and westward expansion. However, the east side of the city is old and run down. Great police services and city maintenance. Excellent schools. What are the plans for 84th Street shopping area (where Wal-Mart used to be)? This survey was too long and I would have liked to see more open ended questions...areas for comments.
- City wide wireless internets connectively. An indoor pool - not a water park.
- We were just annexed. Prior to that, snow removal was well below acceptable. Snow plows would come around the curve too fast, jump the curb and plow up the grass. Occasionally would damage sprinkler heads which had to be replaced.
- The new conference center needs to be successful and self supporting.
- Maintaining levels of service in the eastern part of the city as the west rentals.
- Don't raise my taxes. They are high enough already. It is a joke, I don't have kids, nor should I pay for them. No pools, no parks, no nothing. Stop raising my taxes. I will move if this continues. I moved here for a good community, not a good tax community.
- Plain and simple I am from Georgia and have never seen higher taxes in my life. I believe that it is outrageous!!! I can't go anywhere without running into road construction. And honestly, if the rec department offers more than mainly just the adult activities I saw. Please advertise them better because I can only find the free play group for my children

and I have seen better. I am just happy we are moving home so that my tax money doesn't go for these stupid surveys again. Maybe the council members should just listen to people when we talk.

- Can't afford the taxes now, if they get any higher we will have to sell and move where taxes are cheaper.
- I currently rent, the one thing making us second guessing to stay in La Vista is that the restaurants still allow smoking. I love Omaha's ban on smoking in public places - so much so that we might be buying a home in Omaha instead of La Vista. I hope La Vista considers a smoking ban.
- I live in Brentwood Apartments, old ancient people living among these young squirt kids, have very little to do, but watch everybody go to work. Nobody wants to be around ancient old people - it is a good thing I am able to drive to go to VFW and American Legion - I attended 775 funerals with the color guard and fired a rifle, I am World War II. Thank you.
- According to the pay ordinance published in the paper, the city administrator/dept heads are over paid for the size of the city. Staff lower down the ladder are not paid enough in keeping with cost of living adjustments. Police patrols need to be better. I live on the old east side and hardly ever do we see a cruiser. The city needs to worry less about flowers being planted in the row and more about tearing down unsightly properties like longs svc station. I don't even know who my council members are. They need to get out and be seen and heard.
- School system.
- It is hard to think of amenities when you or your neighbors are struggling to make ends meet.
- I would like to see La Vista with its own high school.
- I see a lot of children walking around after curfew in La Vista. I know it is the parents responsibility but new residents don't know La Vista has a curfew.
- Need a larger post office with a parking lot...makes a lot of sense. We need more than 3 sit down restaurants. We need a hotel or motel. It feels tight, not open with a lot of choices.
- Get rid of all the Section 8 housing.
- La Vista needs some new/fresh city council members, preferably with more experience/education to help foster the forward growth we have begun. There are too many current council members who have been in too long and are not easily accepting to change or creative to make changes.
- More better paying jobs.
- New job group.
- We really need to protect our children.
- Keep economic growth going and keep taxes down.

- Reduce tax.
- I think you need more schools for all the new neighborhoods that are being built.
- Effort should be made to reduce overall heavy tax burdens even if services would be consolidated or reduced. As to Sarpy County which reflects La Vista, Papillion, Bellevue, etc. A few Sarpy County courthouse elected and employee personnel are not customer friendly. In a small well-managed business they would be fired. Little respect is given to the taxpayers who pay their wages.
- Lower real estate taxes, look to merging with the city of Papillion thus eliminating duplication of services thus saving taxpayer dollars.
- Ban smoking in public places.
- Invest in the schools, everything else stems from that.
- "I am an 87 year old widow and live here at ""assisted living"". They do everything."
- I have not lived in La Vista long enough to answer.
- I am a poor person to complete this form. I am retired, moved to La Vista only three years ago and use no city facilities except the library and the streets. I have no knowledge of city government.
- Hard to answer - I just moved into the area 2 weeks ago.
- Nothing I can see, everything is good.
- I just bought my house here in La Vista 2 months ago, so I have not had time to really get involved in the community or community issues yet.
- Don't know - fairly new to La Vista and to Nebraska...just over one year resident.
- I just moved here 3 weeks ago so I don't have knowledge on the city or its programs.
- Being a renter of only one year, I am not familiar enough with the need for additional services to comment. I am surviving very well with the present facilities.
- My wife and I moved to La Vista 8 years ago from the Grand Island/Kearney area. There was an immediate familiarity for us upon relocating to the area. A smaller town feel yet not afraid of growth by bringing in new business and opportunities for La Vista citizens to enjoy. Both of us professionals, my wife an RN and myself in healthcare administration, plan to spend the rest of our lives in this area of the metro.
- Been here for such a short time I should/could not answer this fairly.
- I have not lived here a year yet, but I am so impressed with the park...clean, well kept. We had an incident at the apartment complex where I live. I was totally impressed with our police - helpful, courteous, took control of situation. The La Vista newsletter provides good information. They strive very hard to make La Vista the best place to live.
- I am quite satisfied with the way things are at the present. I am sure the administration will make any improvements that are necessary.
- I have no clue, I've only lived here in La Vista for 6 months.
- "We are a ""new addition"" to the La Vista city limits - so we are still learning what it has to offer."

- I just moved here in June of 2007 so I don't feel I have enough knowledge about the city to answer these questions.
- I believe they do good and take care of events without me telling them to.
- I do not know, I work in Omaha, attend church in Ralston and my family lives out of the city.